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ABSTRACT

This module, which may be used as the basis for a workshop or as a special topic unit in adult basic education or English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) courses, discusses how to access the formalized human service delivery systems in the United States, which often replace the networks of extended families and friends that immigrants relied on in their birth countries. Topics covered include the following: preparing a household budget; organizing records; listing local support service agencies; investigating the "rules of the game"; writing letters of commendation; acquiring and evaluating information; analyzing and solving problems; calculating income and expenses; and communicating in writing. Basic skills addressed include communication skills, thinking skills, personal qualities, using resources, interpersonal skills, using information, and working with systems. The module contains the following: teaching points for the instructor; sample learning activities; a list of 21 resources; a sample lesson plan consisting of objectives, learners and context, room setup, materials needed, tasks to do ahead, media used, and steps for conducting the lesson; readings; role-play materials; and pre- and postassessments. (KC)

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ED 416 350

LAES
Latino Adult Education Services

Tierra de Oportunidad

MODULE 13

Issues in Accessing Services

Ed Kissam and Holda Dorsey

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INSTRUCTIONAL AREA
Managing Family Life

MODULE 13
Issues In Accessing Services

Overview

Life in the United States is usually more rootless and separate from networks of family and friends than in other countries, with time pressures on economically-pressed working couples, due to housing patterns. And due to cultural assumptions, women end up bearing primary responsibility for seeking support from the formalized human service delivery systems which replace the informal support networks of rural society. This module introduces and prepares adult learners for the challenges they face in seeking services. Understanding how "the system" works can make things a little easier.

Formalized service delivery systems provide an important range of support services to families encountering a variety of problems. While the menu of services is broad, many services listed on the menu are hard to access for everyone, but particularly for immigrants. Access requires a long time on a waiting list, extensive documentation of eligibility or multiple interactions with eligibility workers. California's human services vary in quality and, in many cases, adopt authoritarian styles and establish intrusive requirements that examine families' lives in detail. Nonetheless, the support these formal service delivery systems provide represent important resources for women, their children, and, to some extent, to families as a whole.

Immigrant women face many barriers in accessing service systems -- language, unfamiliarity with "the rules of the game" and eligibility difficulties because one or more members of their families might not be authorized to reside in the U.S. Some points are critical for women to remember in overcoming these barriers. Free legal aid and legal services programs throughout California will advocate on behalf of a woman, and outreach workers in many programs will provide advice and easy-to-understand information even when professional staff are unsympathetic. Some programs have client advocates whose job is to help clients with the administrative complexities of the program.

Children born in the United States are eligible for all service programs, irrespective of their parents' immigration status. All children are guaranteed the right to equal educational opportunities whether they are legally in the U.S. or not from kindergarten through 12th grade (though not at community colleges, or college).

Important services which are available at no cost or at reduced cost include pre-natal care and nutrition assistance, delivery, peri-natal care, immunizations, and special medical care for children with disabilities. Early childhood education programs such as Head Start and Migrant Head Start are likely to provide high-quality comprehensive service to children and their families but are difficult to get into. Other subsidized child care programs are also important resources but are also very hard to access.

Public housing programs are also an important resource as they can subsidize rent or provide low-cost rental housing (usually on a sliding scale which keeps shelter costs below one-third of a family's income). However, there are very long waiting lists for these programs. A wide range of other services -- home weatherization, lifeline rates on telephone service, and help with electricity bills -- is also available.

Major public assistance programs -- CALWORKS (the new name for welfare, AFDC, TANF), Food Stamps, and Medi-Cal now have limitations on even legal immigrants' eligibility. But the benefits these programs provide are often crucial to the well-being of families which do qualify. Securing help in getting a job or employment training, transportation, and child care related issues have taken on great significance in making good on the promise of "welfare to work" programs so individuals will need to become familiar with state and local rules, as well as new resources relating to the new CALWORKS program.

A key point for legal immigrants to remember is that they can usually access many services they are, otherwise, ineligible for if: a) they have worked for "40 quarters", b) they have become a naturalized citizen. When they are in doubt they should get expert, free, legal advice from an immigrant advocacy organization.

The eligibility rules and guidelines for many social and human service programs are now undergoing a series of rapid changes which are confusing to clients and service agency personnel alike. Families who want help need to be prepared to be patient but assertive in seeking the services to which they are entitled. They need to be prepared to question and confirm the information given them by friends, family members, neighbors, and even by agency representatives themselves. However, although there is much bad news, there are several new important efforts to retain the traditional "safety net" for California children.

A new California program was very recently established (September, 1997) to help legal immigrants who are now ineligible for federally-funded food stamps due to welfare reform. The new program is called the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP). Under the new program, many legal immigrants can get the same kind of help they could previously. However, eligibility for this program is restricted to children (less than 18 years old) and older persons (65 years of age or older).

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Many federal nutrition programs are still available to all who qualify, regardless of immigration status. These programs where all qualifying immigrants continue to be eligible include: School Lunch and Breakfast programs, Summer Meals, Child Care Food Program, WIC.

Even women and children without papers are guaranteed access to some limited kinds of health care -- emergency and prenatal care. Women who are unsure of their rights because of their immigration status or the immigration status of their families should seek the advice of an immigrant advocacy group or legal services office.

Persons legalized under IRCA are now usually permanent residents and can petition to become citizens and for their wives and minor children to be legally admitted to the U.S. outside of the visa quota system. Although the citizenship process takes time and energy, it is the only way for families to guarantee themselves equal access to publicly-funded services.

Basic Skills Development

Basic Skills	Estimating income and expenses. Planning a budget. Improved ability to avoid confrontation with social services workers, to guide dialogue to address actual real-world problems, and to maximize social workers' flexibility in responding to problems.
Thinking Skills	Weighing and comparing different perspectives on hard-to-understand information. Securing clarification of ambiguous or inconsistent information.
Personal Qualities	Planning and organizing activities to reach goals. Gets along with people. Responds appropriately as situation requires.
Uses Resources	Allocates time, ranks activities in order of importance, prepares and follows schedules.
Uses Information	Securing information provided by pamphlets, informal sources of information such as friends, formal sources of information such as caseworkers and children's teachers. Securing information from mass media, print, specialized hotlines, as well as outreach.

Works With Systems	Investigates "rules" of support systems. Learns to follow such rules. Maintains good records.

Teaching Points
General Points to Cover

1. **In the U.S., some support systems are complicated and highly bureaucratized. As the primary family member interacting with these support systems, women should learn the "rules of the game".** While individual social workers may be concerned, caring, and helpful persons, many of the key human services systems are highly legalistic and incorporate complex eligibility rules, formal processes for dealing with contingencies, and complicated but fair and legal procedures for overcoming problems. It is essential to understand the full implications of each action, either communicated verbally or via an official notice, taken by a social or human service system.

2. **Eligibility for many services is conditioned on family income so families should make it a priority to keep good records of income and expenses.** The particular kinds of documentation required to demonstrate eligibility for a program are often prescribed by law or regulation and, in terms of eligibility determination, most social workers have little leeway or opportunities to be flexible. Therefore, it is essential for families (and this may well mean women) to take great care to keep the best records they can of income and expenses -- on a monthly basis.

3. **Legal immigrants' eligibility for some important family support programs (e.g. Food Stamps) is contingent on their being able to demonstrate they have worked for 10 years in the United States.** This requirement is phrased in a complex legal way (as a waiver to the ban on legal immigrants' eligibility for some programs) based on "forty quarters" of earnings. In fact, there are provisions in the law to deal with the problems experienced by families who are seasonally unemployed. Legal immigrant families should can often get free legal advice to help them in demonstrating their eligibility. However, here too, keeping good records are a big help.

4. **Some social service programs do have difficult questions which applicants should be on guard for.** In general, it is necessary for persons seeking services to provide the information legally required to determine eligibility, but it is not wise to consider social workers as confidantes or general-purpose resources for solving the full range of problems. If a woman does not understand a question on a form or in an interview, or if that question seems strange or confusingly worded, she should insist that the social worker explain the meaning of the question fully.

Social workers are required to explain fully the implications of each action they take. If they do not, it is good grounds for appealing to their supervisor or seeking the assistance of a legal services provider or community organization advocate. Most actions by the complicated human services system can be appealed, within the regulatory constraints of the program, and women should not hesitate to exercise their appeal rights.

5. **Outreach workers are more likely to be Spanish-speaking and genuinely concerned about the welfare of families seeking services than professional staff. Outreach workers should be seen as important resources.** "Professionalism" often, though not always, limits compassion and concern. Paraprofessionals -- teachers' aides, migrant education outreach workers, translators in hospitals, social service aides, community organization staff -- are important sources of information about the "rules of the game" of various social systems.

6. **"Referrals" is a process intended to insure that a person who is not eligible for help from one agency will get it from another. Referrals seldom work well without the "client's" active involvement.** While referrals are officially considered to be a way to facilitate a person's access to another program than the one they have originally contacted. At a minimum, a referral should include an assurance that there really will be a service provided, easy-to-understand directions written down for reference as to how to get to the new office, an accurate idea of when the new agency office is open, and a general idea of what kind of services are available and what the eligibility guidelines are. The client, in this case an immigrant woman, should hold the person who has referred her to a new program accountable for making sure she gets help instead of getting a run-around. Women should be urged to be persistent in getting the service they are theoretically eligible for. That persistence should include requesting that agencies not place an undue burden on her to come back time and again to provide additional documentation, that agencies explain why there may be a delay in getting service, and why an applicant is not considered eligible for service if she is refused help. As in the case of seeking help directly from an agency, women should insist that the language used by the social service workers she is in contact with be clear, lucid, and intelligible without too many "big words" -- no matter how long it takes.

7. **Women seeking help have a basic human right to be treated in a respectful and dignified way.** "Human service" providers are frequently rushed in interacting with the people they are to help. Women should demand respectful treatment and be prepared to explain that they are do not know the system, and need help.

8. **Applicants for services should always expect to receive a formal notice granting or denying service and should be encouraged to request one.** Bureaucracies always have processes for appeal, reconsideration, or a waiver of rules in certain circumstances, but they do no good if applicants are unaware of them, not provided proper notice, do not ask, or do not seek appropriate advice and legal counsel.

9. **Counselors, outreach workers, teachers, and social workers who are committed to quality service can often provide important information, advice, and counsel, even if they cannot do anything directly to help someone.** Women seeking help with the problems they face should understand how unusual it is for a social worker to genuinely and candidly admit that they can not be of any direct assistance but that they would like to help however they can. This advice, counsel, and information can be valuable even if there is no direct, tangible benefit a social worker can provide her or his client. Service systems which have a reputation for being most flexible, understanding, and committed to doing what they can, outside of very narrow program guidelines, include emergency hotlines, legal services offices, grassroots community organizations and, in some cases, the school system. Church-based groups, homeless shelters, and mutual self-help groups are also likely to show and follow through with genuine concern despite having very few resources.

Some Specific Service Entitlements to Point Out to Immigrants

10. **Medi-Cal is available to pregnant women, irrespective of immigration status.** California is now trying very hard to expand Medi-Cal coverage for low-income women in a new program called Baby-Cal. Health care providers hold information they receive in strict confidentiality.

11. **Children born in the U.S. are citizens and eligible for all public health services and public assistance support.** Children who are not born in the U.S. and who do not have legal immigration status are still eligible for many kinds of help which are not conditioned on immigration status. It becomes the adult's responsibility to be alert, interested in new developments and abreast of new information.

12. **Children are guaranteed equal education opportunities under the law, irrespective of immigration status.** Parents have the right and duty to assure that their children get the best possible education. Not only can children without papers go to school, their parents can and should demand that they get effective high-quality education, including effective educational support for learning English.

13. **There are shelters for women who are victims of domestic violence.** Almost every community has a shelter for women and their children who must leave their homes because their husbands are treating them badly. But many of these shelters do not have bilingual staff. It is wise for immigrant women to contact an immigrant rights group or have a friend who speaks English help them if they have to leave home.

14. **Seeking help from the police**. A woman can seek help from the police if she is a victim of a crime, if she is raped, if she is harassed, or if she is threatened by a man, without risking deportation. Police have no right to ask a victim her immigration status.

15. **Some free child-care and childhood development programs are available and when a family pays a child care provider those costs are tax-deductible.** Head Start is an important program and well-known but there may be other child care or child development and pre-school education programs available in the community. Families who can benefit from deducting child-care costs on their income tax, however, need to keep records of what their child care costs are.

16. **California libraries are more and more commonly providing at least small sections of books, manuals, and pamphlets in various languages.** Using libraries is free and the information they have available is often very helpful to families. Some libraries have storytelling and reading programs for children. If at all possible, families should get in the habit of using the free resources the libraries represent and whenever possible urging librarians to secure more materials in their native languages.

17. **For low-income families with children, it is important to submit a federal income tax return each year, because the tax return is the basis for the Earned Income Credit (EITC) and for a tax credit for families with children.** The "Earned Income Tax Credit" is a kind of service or subsidy meant to help low-income families. Filing a federal tax return is important for a number of reasons, including the legal requirement to do so. In terms of support services for families, the Earned Income Credit is important to low income families. Earned-income tax credit can be worth a good deal of money. Families with children also can receive a tax credit to help them out. Keeping good records is the basic foundation for filing an accurate tax return. People should take the trouble to ask help from adult school instructors, neighbors, friends, or family members for advice about how to keep good records. Some community groups provide free tax preparation assistance. Migrant and transnational families should take special care in using the EITC programs because they are sometimes ineligible. Tax preparers' advice should be checked and confirmed if one falls into one of these groups.

18. **Legal services organizations can provide free advice and help to almost all low-income persons.** Legal services providers cannot provide free legal representation on all issues but they can provide advice, information, and assistance on most issues related to accessing services. The particular organization which has experience in serving immigrants varies from county to county but some "legal aid" provider exists in almost all areas of California.

Sample Activities

1. Invite local public health department staff person to make a presentation on health services for women. Encourage class participants to ask questions and share their problems of access with the staff representatives.

2. Invite women from grassroots cooperative organizations such as Mujeres Unidas y Activas in the San Francisco Bay Area or the Red De Defensa Laboral in the Los Angeles area to talk to the class about their organization, their personal experiences in accessing services, and their strategies for overcoming the problems they've faced.

3. Work with class participants to prepare monthly budgets of income and expenses. Expense categories in the budget should include at least the following categories to make them as useful as possible for answering program eligibility questions: shelter costs, with rent or mortgage, electricity, water, garbage, broken out; work-related costs, i.e., transportation, child care; health care costs, including prescriptions, special treatments; food costs and debt payments. Are there other categories that class participants think are important and should be recorded?

4. Work in class with participants to set up a home accounting box -- perhaps an accordion folder -- with file folders for receipts, pay stubs, bills, and for important correspondence from public agencies.

5. Role play an eligibility interview for TANF, Medi-Cal, or Food Stamps with a county social services agency. Ask women who have themselves gone to an eligibility interview to play the role of the eligibility worker. If there are no volunteers, the instructor can role play the eligibility worker.

6. Lead class participants in a discussion of which human service agencies in the community are: a) most important to their lives, b) provide the best or worst service, and c) why. Write a class letter to either the agency agreed to be the best congratulating it on its good service or to the agency agreed to be the worst listing the problems people have encountered.

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7. Invite a maternal-child health care provider to a class session. Lead a discussion of different perspectives on the importance or unimportance of prenatal care, deliveries in formal settings such as hospitals or informal settings with midwives. At the end of the discussion, ask the health care provider to address class participants' concerns or misconceptions, if any, and, in short, to make a pitch.

8. Invite a local school representative to the class to talk to the class about the problems they feel they have as an educator in serving students well and ask class members' advice in suggesting ways in which educational services to immigrant children can be improved.

9. Role play a good referral from one service agency to another and, also, a bad referral and discuss the differences.

10. Discuss and list the kinds of behavior on the part of human service providers which communicate respect and bolster dignity in contrast those which communicate disrespect, indifference, or hostility. List at least three of each.

11. Invite an emergency hotline representative to talk about the kinds of people at the other end of the phone line when people call and what happens when a call comes in.

12. Explore the Internet with students to discover the kinds of resources available to get up-to-date information on immigrants' eligibility for different programs of public assistance. (The situation of immigrants' eligibility for services as a result of federal welfare reform legislation is the paradigm case of one where the World-wide Web provides virtually the only way for even professionals to keep up-to-date).

13. Invite a legal services representative to talk to the class about the legal rights of a family applying for service, specifically what expectations they should have about how they should be treated and what their rights to appeal an unfavorable decision might be and how to pursue these rights. The legal services speaker might also explain what their organization can and can't do to help families with these sorts of issues.

14. Using an up-to-date table giving poverty guidelines in relation to family size, work with students to understand how to use this table to estimate their own eligibility for programs which are available only to "low income" families. Practice using guidelines which specify eligibility as a percentage of "poverty level" (e.g. 125% of poverty level, 200% of poverty level) to determine eligibility. Estimate what kind of differences there are in terms of the proportion of class participants whose families might be eligible.

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RESOURCES
Handouts

California Immigrant Welfare Collaborative - "Major Benefit Programs Available to Immigrants in California - 1997" - 2 pp.

California Food Policy Advocates -- "Food Stamp Update: State-only Food Stamps for Legal Immigrants" - 4 pp. (English/Spanish versions)

California Food Policy Advocates -- "Immigrant Children are Eligible for Child Nutrition Programs!" - 4 pp. (English/Spanish versions)

Organizations

California Food Policy Advocates
(800) 218-3663
(information on all aspects of access to services, emphasis on food and nutrition)

National Immigration Law Center
1636 West 8th St., Suite 215
Los Angeles, CA 90017
(213) 487-2531
(training sessions, definitive materials on benefits eligibility)

Immigrant Legal Resource Center
1663 Mission St., Suite 602
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 255-9499
(training sessions, definitive materials on benefits eligibility)

Children Now
(800) 829-1040
(information line in Spanish on Earned Income Credit)

Volunteer Information Tax Assistance
IRS (800-289-1040)

Local phone books have a wealth of information on services available in local communities. Look under the "Government" heading or under the name of the specific service of interest, e.g. "Family Planning".

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World-Wide Web Resources

State of California - Index of agencies
www.state.ca.us/s/

California Department of Education
www.cde.ca.gov/index.html

http://www.fadaa.org/new/welfare.html
This is a good example of a WWW "node" for additional information resources. This site provides a list of other sites which track the development of welfare reform legislation, rules, regulations, and state program innovations and decisions about eligibility rules. Major resources (links) on this page include:

HHS --Administration of Children and Families' Welfare Page offers definitive information and valuable resources on the implications of welfare reform.

American Public Welfare Association (APWA) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization whose mission is to educate the public on health care reform, child welfare, and other issues affecting families.

Families USA offers articles and reports on health care, reform, politics, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Idea Central: Welfare and Families offers discussion of family issues, welfare reform, politics and policy from liberal and progressive authors.

The Medicaid Clearinghouse provides current resources for citizens and listings of relevant documents.

National Governors' Association (NGA) provides recent developments, research, statistics, and state information on welfare reform.

National Internet Clearinghouse Welfare Reform page is developed by National Association of Counties (NACO) and provides information on welfare reform at the local, state, and national levels.

ESL Commercial Textbooks

- Choices: Discovering Your Community, Contemporary Books
  Unit 6, I Checked Out This Book

- The ETC Program, A Competency-Based Reading/Writing Book, Book 5: Language and Culture in Depth, Random House
  Chapter 5, Getting Help

CALIFORNIA FOOD POLICY ADVOCATES

Food Stamp Update:
State-only Food Stamps for Legal Immigrants

Q: What is the "California Food Assistance Program" (CFAP) for legal immigrants?

A: A new state program was created to provide state-funded Food Stamp benefits for legal immigrant children and elderly who, because of their immigration status, no longer qualify for regular, federally funded Food Stamps. The new program is effective September 1, 1997.

Q: Which legal immigrants are eligible for benefits under the new "state-only" Food Stamp program?

A: To be eligible for state-only Food Stamps, a legal immigrant (1) must be either under the age of 18, or at least age 65 or older; and (2) must have been legally within the United States prior to August 22, 1996; and (3) otherwise meet all Food Stamp eligibility requirements.

Q: Which legal immigrants cannot get Food Stamp benefits under the new state program?

A: A legal immigrant who qualifies for federal Food Stamps cannot receive state-only CFAP benefits. Although the federal welfare reform law last year eliminated federal Food Stamp benefits for large numbers of legal immigrants, some are still able to qualify for the federal program. For example, there are specific exemptions for certain legal immigrants who have worked in the United States for 40 calendar quarters, military veterans, refugees, asylees, and a few other categories. If a legal immigrant qualifies for the regular, federally funded Food Stamp program under one of these exceptions, he or she cannot also get CFAP benefits.

Q: Do legal immigrants who have had their SSI benefits restored under the federal Balanced Budget Act qualify for the state-only Food Stamp program?

A: No. In California, SSI recipients as a group cannot receive Food Stamp benefits. Although SSI recipients in other states can receive Food Stamps, California has "cashed out" the Food Stamp program through an agreement with the federal government, so that instead of Food Stamp coupons their approximate value are received by SSI recipients in California as part of their state supplemental payments (SSP). Since SSI recipients are not permitted to receive federal Food Stamps in California, the same rule applies to the state-only Food Stamp program. (See below.)

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Q: *Are the rules for determining eligibility and the amount of benefits under CFAP the same as the federal Food Stamp program?*

A: Yes. In all other respects, the two programs operate the same. All the other rules, regulations and requirements under federal and state law that apply to the federal Food Stamp program apply to the state-only CFAP program. The amount of Food Stamp benefits that a legal immigrant receives under the state-only program should be the same as would have been provided under the federal program.

Q: *If any or all of the members of a family or household that had been receiving federal Food Stamps were terminated from the federal program recently because of immigration status, how do they get into the new state-only Food Stamp program?*

A: Households will be either a "continuing case" or a "new case."

Any legal immigrant household member who received Food Stamps in August 1997 AND was discontinued on August 31, 1997, SOLELY due to their status as an ineligible legal non-citizen, is eligible for CFAP benefits effective September 1, 1997 -- provided they meet the age requirements and were legally present in the United States prior to August 22, 1996. Such cases are considered to be "continuing cases" and legal immigrant members of the household who qualify for CFAP will be automatically brought into the program.

Any legal immigrant members that were discontinued from the federal Food Stamp program PRIOR to August 31, 1997, for whatever reason, must reapply as "new cases" under normal application guidelines.

Q: *When can legal immigrants expect to receive the state-only Food Stamp benefits?*

A: For continuing cases, where the legal immigrant members were terminated effective August 31, 1997 and qualify for CFAP benefits, counties have been instructed to process September 1997 CFAP benefits "as soon as is administratively feasible" and to issue benefits for the full month, retroactively to September 1, 1997. CFAP benefits for September 1997 must be issued to qualifying legal immigrants no later than October 31, 1997. CFAP benefits for October 1997 are to be issued "no later than the household's normal October issuance date."

Q: *What other resources exist for legal immigrants?*

A: The state created a food voucher program for migrant farmworkers, appropriating $2 million for this year. Details on the creation of the program will be made by the Department of Community Services and Development will implement and oversee the distribution of benefits. For more information, call 916-322-2940.

Rev. Sept. 30 1997

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CALIFORNIA FOOD POLICY ADVOCATES

Legal Immigrant Children and Seniors still eligible for Food Stamps

A new state program was created to provide state-funded Food Stamp benefits for legal immigrant children and elderly who lost their regular, federal Food Stamps because of welfare reform. The new program is effective September 1, 1997.

Q: Who can get "state-only" Food Stamps?

A: Legal immigrants must:

(1) be under the age of 18, or at least age 65 or older;
(2) have been legally in the United States before August 22, 1996;
(3) otherwise meet all Food Stamp eligibility requirements.

Q: Who cannot get Food Stamp benefits under the new state program?

A: Anyone getting federal food stamps, as well as anyone still eligible for federal food stamps.

Q: When can you get state-only Food Stamp benefits?

A: Immediately. If you lost federal food stamps and are eligible for the state program, your county owes you food stamps from September 1 on and has until the end of October to give you the benefits.

Q: How can I get the food stamps?

See your eligibility worker, if you have one. Otherwise, call the Department of Social Services (in the county listings of the phone book).

If you have questions about the state food stamp program, please contact your eligibility worker.

Rev. Sept. 10, 1997

CALIFORNIA FOOD POLICY ADVOCATES

Immigrant Children are Eligible for Child Nutrition Programs!

Citizenship or Legal Residency is Not Required

Federal Child Nutrition Programs have not been cut. Children can still get free nutritious meals if they are from low-income families. Undocumented immigrants are eligible. Citizenship status should not be asked of any participant in the following programs:

- **School Lunch and Breakfast**

  Served in most of California's public and private schools. Free and reduced priced meals available to all low-income children.

  Parents -- You need to complete a "Free and Reduced Priced Application" at the child's school. The application asks for your Social Security Number. If you don't have one, you must write "none" in the space provided. **Your child will still be eligible.** This information will remain at the school and may not be given to INS.

- **Summer Meals**

  Free to all children 18 years and younger. No income requirement. No documentation needed. Breakfast and lunch and sometimes snacks are served daily during the summer months at many neighborhood agencies and public schools.

- **Child Care Food Program**

  Meals to children 12 years and younger who are in day care at Head Start, day care centers, family day care homes and after-school programs. No fee for meals, but the cost may be built into the general program fee.

- **WIC [Special Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children]**

  Nutritious supplemental food to pregnant or breast feeding women infants and children up to 5 years old. Eligibility is based on income and medical or nutritional risk. WIC sites are located in health care facilities, hospitals and neighborhood clinics.

For more information call: California Food Policy Advocates at 1-800-218-3663 or 415-291-0282

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CALIFORNIA IMMIGRANT WELFARE COLLABORATIVE
MAJOR BENEFIT PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO IMMIGRANTS IN CALIFORNIA – 1997

PROGRAM AND STATUS	QUALIFIED IMMIGRANTS[1] IN THE U.S. BEFORE AUGUST 22, 1996	QUALIFIED IMMIGRANTS WHO ENTER THE U.S. ON OR AFTER AUGUST 22, 1996	"NOT QUALIFIED"[2] IMMIGRANTS
SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) & STATE SUPPLEMENTAL PAYMENT (SSP) *Effective immediately, as if part of the 1996 welfare law*	**Eligible if:** • Become a naturalized citizen • SSI recipient on 8/22/96 • Qualify as disabled[3] • Veteran, active duty military, their spouse, surviving spouse (unremarried), or child • Have credit for 40 quarters of work[4] • Refugee, asylee, granted withholding of deportation, Cuban-Haitian entrant, Amerasian, *during first 7 years after getting status* • American Indians born in Canada and other tribal members born outside U.S. **Not eligible if:** • 65 or over but do not meet disability criteria or exemptions	**Not eligible unless:** • Become a naturalized citizen • Veteran, active duty military, their spouse, surviving spouse (unremarried), or child • Have credit for 40 quarters of work (but must wait until in U.S. for 5 years before applying) • Refugee, asylee, granted withholding of deportation, Cuban-Haitian entrant, Amerasian, *during first 7 years after getting status* • American Indians born in Canada and other tribal members born outside U.S.	**Not eligible unless:** • Receiving SSI benefits on August 22, 1996. (Can receive benefits until Sept. 30, 1998.) • Note: If applied for benefits before Jan. 1, 1979, Social Security Administration must have clear and convincing evidence that are "not qualified" in order to terminate benefits
FEDERAL FOOD STAMPS	**Not eligible unless:** • Become a naturalized citizen • Veteran, active duty military, their spouse, surviving spouse (unremarried), or child • Have credit for 40 quarters of work[4] • Refugee, asylee, granted withholding of deportation, Cuban-Haitian entrant, Amerasian, *during first 5 years after getting status*	**Not eligible unless:** • Become a naturalized citizen • Veteran, active duty military, their spouse, surviving spouse (unremarried), or child • Have credit for 40 quarters of work (but must wait until in U.S. for 5 years before applying) • Refugee, asylee, granted withholding of deportation, Cuban-Haitian entrant, Amerasian, *during first 5 years after getting status.*	**Not eligible**
STATE FOOD STAMPS *Effective September 1, 1997. Program is scheduled to end on July 1, 2000.*	**Eligible if:** • Under 18 years old • 65 or older	**Not eligible**	**Not eligible**

CALIFORNIA IMMIGRANT WELFARE COLLABORATIVE

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PROGRAM AND STATUS	QUALIFIED IMMIGRANTS IN THE U.S. BEFORE AUGUST 22, 1996	QUALIFIED IMMIGRANTS WHO ENTER THE U.S. ON OR AFTER AUGUST 22, 1996	"NOT QUALIFIED" IMMIGRANTS
CALWORKS (Replaces AFDC) *Signed into law August 11, 1997; will go into effect in January 1998*	**Eligible** • Immigrants with sponsors are subject to old AFDC deeming rules (during first 3 years in the U.S., sponsor's income is added to immigrant's in determining eligibility for benefits).	**Eligible** • Immigrants with old affidavits of support subject to 3 year deeming rules • Immigrants with new affidavits of support subject to new federal deeming rules (exemption if immigrant would go hungry or homeless without assistance or is victim of domestic violence)	**Not eligible**
NON-EMERGENCY MEDI-CAL	**Eligible** • No change in eligibility	**Eligible** • No change in eligibility	**At this time, not eligible unless:** • Receiving SSI • Permanently residing in the U.S. under color of law (PRUCOL)
EMERGENCY MEDI-CAL OR COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES *(Includes labor & delivery)*	**Eligible**	**Eligible**	**Eligible**
NON-EMERGENCY COUNTY MEDICAL SERVICES	**Eligible**	**Eligible**	**Eligibility varies by county** (no change from prior law)
GENERAL ASSISTANCE	**Eligible**	**Eligible**	**Generally ineligible** (no change from prior law)

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[1] Qualified immigrants are: (1) lawful permanent residents (includes Amerasian immigrants); (2) refugees, asylees, persons granted withholding of deportation, or paroled for at least one year; (3) Cuban-Haitian entrants; and (4) battered spouses and children with a pending or approved: (a) spousal visa, or (b) petition for relief under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), whose need for benefits has a substantial connection to the battery or cruelty.

[2] Not qualified immigrants include all non-citizens who do not fit within the "qualified immigrant" categories.

[3] Qualified immigrants who are blind or disabled are eligible for SSI if they were lawfully residing in the U.S. on or before August 22, 1996.

[4] Lawful permanent residents can earn credit if they have worked 40 qualifying quarters. Inmigrants also get credit for work performed: (1) by parents when the immigrant was under 18; and (2) by spouse during the marriage (unless the marriage ended in divorce or annulment). No credit is given for a quarter worked after Dec. 31, 1996 if a federal means-tested benefit (SSI, Medi-Cal, Food Stamps, or AFDC/CalWORKS) is received in that quarter.

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13. ISSUES IN ACCESSING SERVICES

OBJECTIVES

- prepare a household budget
- organize records
- list local support service agencies
- investigate "rules of the game"
- write letters of commendation

LEARNERS & CONTEXT

Adult students. Average ability of the group is medium. The range of ability is wide. Motivation is high. Group size is between 11 and 30. There are many learners whose English is limited.

ROOM SETUP

Small tables and chairs to allow for small group activities

TO BRING

Budget Planner

TO DO AHEAD

Collect multiple telephone books of the area.
Get accordion folders, file folders, envelopes

MEDIA USED

Overhead, manipulative, phone books.

STEPS

Warm up
Introduction
Prepare a budget
Organize records
Analyze budget
List agencies
Use phone book
Brainstorm questions
Break
Rate agencies'
Write letter
Reflect
Investigate "rules"
Evaluate

Lesson Plan: 13. Accessing Services

Warm up

(8 min)

Motivation
• Establish Future Relevance

Teacher quizzes students about social service agencies that they might have used or heard about.

Introduction

(7 min)

Information Preview
• State Objectives Formally

overhead

Teacher shows on the overhead and states the objectives of the lesson.
Students, you will be able to:
• prepare a household budget;
• organize records;
• list local support service agencies;
• investigate "rules of the game";
• write letters of commendation.

And you will also practice:
* acquiring and evaluating information;
* analyzing and solving problems;
* calculating income and expenses;
* communicating in writing.

Prepare a budget

(15 min)

Prior Knowledge Activation
• Review Previous Learning

print

Teacher reviews with students what are the fixed expenses of their household. Bills you need to pay each month. usually they are the same from month to month and usually come at the same time of the month.

After the list of fixed expenses is compiled, teacher asks students to compile a list of changing expenses, those bills that cost different amounts of money and are paid at different times. For example , food costs.

Teacher asks students to prepare a budget for one month by listing all income and expenses.

Organize records

(15 min)

Motivation
• Raise Confidence

manipulatives

Teacher asks students how they keep their receipts and other papers.

Students and teacher brainstorm as to what needs to be saved and ways to organize the papers.

Teacher gives students materials to prepare their own "File Box". Accordion files, folders, or envelopes.

Students are to list headings for their "File Box", alphabetize the list, and label their "File Box".

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Lesson Plan: 13. Accessing Services

	Analyze budget *(7 min)* *Motivation* • *Establish Tie to Interests*	Teacher asks students to work with a partner, analyze their budgets, and suggest how money could be saved.
	List agencies *(8 min)* *Practice & Feedback* • *Brainstorming*	Teacher prompts students to brainstorm names of support service agencies that might help cover expenses.
	Use phone book *(10 min)* *Information Acquisition* • *Inquiry - Individual* *phone books*	Students use the phone books to locate addresses and phone numbers of support service agencies in the area. The list can be alphabetized and taken to the office to make a transparency.
	Brainstorm questions *(10 min)* *Practice & Feedback* • *Brainstorming*	Teacher ask students to sit in groups of four and brainstorm the kinds of questions that support service agencies might ask. Student groups generate their lists, teacher monitors students brainstorm. Student groups share their questions with each other.
	Break *(15 min)* *Other* • *Break*	Students may take a few minutes to stretch, walk around, and change places. Teacher completes attendance records and retrieves transparency of list of agencies.

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Lesson Plan: 13. Accessing Services

	Rate agencies	Teacher shows list of agencies on the overhead and asks students, if they have had contact with any of them.
(10 min)	*Practice & Feedback* *• Creative Practice*	If the students have had contact with the agencies, they are to rate them as S = supportive; N = non-supportive; M= mediocre
	overhead	After the students have rated all the agencies, teacher asks them to select the best three supportive agencies.
	Write letter	Teacher asks students to write a letter of commendation to the three selected agencies, listing reasons for the commendation.
(15 min)	*Practice & Feedback* *• Creative Practice*	Students in groups draft a letter, then exchange with another group for corrections and ideas.
		Students draft final letter to be mailed in the name of the class.
	Reflect	Students reflect on what they have learned. Students can write a money saving idea that they can use right away, or an agency that they will contact to assist them.
(10 min)	*Closure* *• Reflection*	Teacher asks students to share the idea they plan to use or the agency they plan to contact.
	Investigate "rules"	Teacher informs students that as homework they are to select an agency from the list. Contact it by phone or in person and inquire about the rules for qualifying, applying, and receiving services offered.
(10 min)	*Other* *• Assign Homework*	Students are to report back to the group in a weeks time.
	overhead	Students select their agency. Teacher writes student name on transparency to confirm who is responsible for what.
	Evaluate	Students review the objectives of the lesson and restate them in their own words, highlighting the aspects important to them. We:
(10 min)	*Closure* *• Learner Summary*	• prepared a household budget; • organized records; • listed local support service agencies; • investigated "rules of the game"; • wrote letters of commendation.

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Lesson Plan: 13. Accessing Services

We also practiced:
* acquiring and evaluating information;
* analyzing and solving problems;
* calculating income and expenses;
* communicating in writing.

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OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- **prepare a household budget;**
- **organize records;**
- **list local support service agencies;**
- **investigate "rules of the game";**
- **write letters of commendation.**

Students will also practice:

* **acquiring and evaluating information;**
* **analyzing and solving problems;**
* **calculating income and expenses;**
* **communicating in writing.**

LAES

Preparing a Budget

Fixed Expenses

1. Rent or house payment _____
2. Gas _____
3. Electricity _____
4. Water _____
5. Telephone _____
6. Transportation _____
7. Insurance _____
8. Payments on credit cards _____
9. Savings _____
10. Any other fixed expenses you may have _____

Changing Expenses

a. Food _____
b. Clothing _____
c. Doctor or dentist
d. Laundry and dry cleaning _____
e. Home repairs _____
f. Gas and car repairs _____
g. Personal items (haircuts, make up, etc.) _____
h. Entertainment (movies, socials, etc.) _____

Total Expenses _____

Total Income _____

Total Expenses _____

Balance _____

LAES

Date: _____

Student Name _____

Teacher Name _____

Student Survey
"Issues in Accessing Services"

1. If you had to go to a government agency, or advise somebody else who needed access to services, how confident are you that you have the skills and information to:

	For Each Line, Please check the box that applies to you			
	Not Very Confident	A Little Confident	Quite Confident	Have All the Information
a. read and understand application forms to get services and official information about applicants' rights ?				
b. ask for a full explanation of any question you don't understand?				
c. understand rules an agency uses to decide who is eligible to get help?				
d. f ind the right person to ask if you want information about services that are available?				
e. figure out what personal records and documents the agency might need to make sure a person is eligible for services?				
f. know what to do if you are turned down for a service?				
g. identify key and trick questions on an application form and understand what the implications from different answers to them would be?				
h. understand if someone who is a legal immigrant has a right to get food stamps				
i. understand if it is safe to ask for help from the police if a person without papers has been the victim of a crime				
j. understand how or why filing an income tax form can help you financially.				

LAES

2. **How confident are you that you have the skills to do the following:**

	For Each Line, Please check the box that applies to you			
	Not Very Confident	**A Little Confident**	**Quite Confident**	**Have All the Information**
a. suggest a friend apply for services, based on information written in a brochure?				
b. estimate whether a friend is eligible to receive services based on information on his or her income and expenses?				
c. communicate with social workers in a way which helps identify and solve problems related to getting the help you need?				
d. avoid getting a "run-around" if you are sent somewhere else for help?				

3. **How confident are you that you have the information you need about the services people are entitled to :**

	For Each Line, Please check the box that applies to you			
	Not Very Confident	**A Little Confident**	**Quite Confident**	**Have All the Information**
a. if they are pregnant and don't have papers?				
b. if their income is low and they need basic, regular health care for their children?				
c. if they don't have Medi-Cal and but have a sudden medical emergency?				
d. if they have children, including children with special needs?				
e. if they have to seek temporary or emergency shelter?				
f. if the police stop them or if they need the assistance of the police?				
g. if you are eligible for Federal Earned Income Tax Credits?				

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4. **Please read the background for the situation below and advise Maria and Franco.**

Background. Maria is pregnant and Franco, her husband, out of work—the plant where he was working closed and since then he has been looking for another job, but not found any; and his unemployment insurance has ended. They have some savings (bonds given by relatives for the new child and $250 they still have left from savings), but not enough money to pay the rent that is due in 2 weeks. What can they do?

a. How can they find out if there is an agency that could help them with housing and upcoming medical bills, and if they are eligible to obtain that assistance?

b. Is there any agency that could help them with housing? And, what issues should they watch out for in dealing with this agency

c. Is there any agency that could help pay for Maria's medical bills when she has the child? And, what issues should they watch out for in dealing with this agency?

5. **What do you want to learn about people getting help from social service agencies, help with medical expenses, or help from some other program like employment training?**

I want to learn:

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Date: _____

Student Name _____

Teacher Name _____

Module 13
Issues in Accessing Services

Instructions: *There are two parts to this activity. The first part asks you to prepare a role play concerning an experience in accessing services. The second part asks you to reflect on your work with this module, and tell us what you have learned.*

Part I.

Find a partner with whom to work. Then, with that partner, pick a local social service agency to focus on in a role play about gaining access to services they provide. In this role play, one partner should tell the other about the services provided by the agency, eligibility requirements, how to apply, office hours, address and a description of how to get to the agency. Other tips for dealing with the agency also should be included in the role play. The other partner asks questions. The role plays may be presented in front of the class. Accuracy of information, clarity of presentation, quality of questions asked, humor and authenticity of the role play will be important for the material you present to be useful. Please write down the key points for the role play in the worksheet provided on the next page, and hand this into your teacher.

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Issues in Accessing Services

Role Play worksheet, please hand this to the teacher.

1. What Social Service Agency did you select?

_____

2. What services are provided?

_____

3. Where is it located and what hours is it open?

_____

4. How can you get to the agency?

_____

5. What are the eligibility requirements for the services ?

_____

6. How you should apply and whom you should see (what is their job title) when you get there?

_____

7. What documents should you bring with you, and what questions should you be prepared to answer?

_____

_____

8. What problems are you likely to face in getting services?

_____

9. What other tips are there for dealing effectively with the agency and its personnel?

_____

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Part II.
Please tell us what you learned from your work with this module

1. Did you benefit from your work on this module regarding any of the following?

	Yes/No	Please comment on either: • How you benefited; or • Why you feel this module was not useful for you in this area
a. Rules for eligibility the social service agencies use and how to apply them?		
b. How to find the right person to ask if you want information about services that are available?		
c. How to figure out what personal records and documents the agency might need to prove eligibility for services?		
d. What to do if you are turned down for a service you need?		
e. How to determine if your right to expect considerate treatment has been violated?		
f. How to identify key questions on an application form and understand what the implications from different answers to them would be?		
g. Understanding how immigration status affects peoples' eligibility for service?		
h. Understanding about tax credits on your income tax		

2. Did your work in this module help you in any of the following areas?

	Yes/No	Please comment on either: • How you benefited; or • Why you feel this module was not useful for you in this area
a. Reading and understanding application forms to get services and official information about the services they provide ?		
b. Researching how to get information you need?		
c. Knowing how to ask for a full explanation of any question you don't understand? Or Clarifying ambiguous information by comparing different interpretations of it?		
d. Discussing problems with family members or those outside your family, and communicating your ideas persuasively?		
e. Writing notes or letters to communicate your position, opinions or feelings on an issue.		
f. Estimating whether a friend is eligible to receive services based on information on his or her income and expenses?		
g. Anything else? Please tell us below:		